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The appearance of a ship of the Grappler's force will have had, in my opinion, a very beneficial effect on the minds of the natives. I was visited by a great number of them, mostly from the interior.

Having done all that I could in the matter, I left the river on the 17th, leaving there the Amaranthe and Fine, French schooners of war, and a Belgian war schooner, which arrived during the night.

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VIII.—*Extract from the Reports of M. HOFMANN, Chief of the Expedition to the North Ural.* (Communicated to Sir Roderick I. Murchison by Admiral Lütke, Vice-Pres. of the Imp. Geog. Soc. of St. Petersburg.)

[Read Jan. 8th, 1849.]

FROM Tobolsk M. Hofmann had descended the Ob in a boat. On the 27th of June the expedition had reached the mouth of the small river Voiker, which takes its rise in the Ural, and falls into the Ob in lat.  $65^{\circ} 50'$ . By this river the expedition arrived at the Ural range.

"We ascended the Voiker for two days, up to the place where our guides were expecting us with their reindeer. We crossed the mountain ridge, not without risk, owing to the rapidity of the torrents, which the thaw had caused to overflow. On the 7th of July we reached the eastern side of the chain, in lat.  $66^{\circ}$ , where bad weather detained us for four days. On the 11th of July we separated from Stroefoki, who took a southern direction, and proceeded towards the N., following the base of the mountain chain, which here rises abruptly from a naked plain; and though it be not very high, yet, owing to the steepness of its slope, its wild and rugged aspect, and the nakedness of its summit, it appears much more elevated than it really is. I do not think that the *Paï-ier*, the highest of its mountains to the N. of the 66th degree, has more than 3000 feet of absolute elevation. We had scarcely started when we experienced the first attacks of a scourge, little dangerous in appearance, but to which we nearly fell victims, viz., gnats; we had to traverse a space of about  $2^{\circ}$  lat., which, notwithstanding its rich pasturage, the nomads avoid like the plague, on account of the innumerable swarms of these insects, which torment the reindeer even to their destruction. Indeed, their numbers increased with the heat in an incredible manner; our poor beasts, which could neither eat nor rest, pined away

before our eyes ; every day many of them died, and one day, hotter than usual, we lost twenty.

"When, on the 8th of August, we arrived, after great difficulties, on the banks of the Ussa (lat.  $67^{\circ} 46'$ ), we literally could not proceed a step farther. Fortunately we soon found nomads, who furnished us with fresh beasts, with which we were enabled to continue our route, and arrive on the banks of the Kara on the 27th of August. The vicinity of the sea delivered us from our persecutors, but brought, on the other hand, cold and foggy weather, which much impedes our movements. . . . Now a few words on the chain of the Ural. Having seen it so near to the banks of the Ob,\* I had imagined that it took a N.E. direction; but we found that towards the parallel of Obdorsk it suddenly turns almost due E. for a distance of from 30 to 35 versts, after which it again resumes its primitive direction from S. to N., which it does not leave until lat.  $68^{\circ} 29'$ , where it rapidly declines towards the Tundra; and from thence to the sea ranges of flat and rocky hillocks are seen running from E. to W., parallel with the sea-coast, in the shape of downs. To the E. and N.E. the Ural is bordered by the Tundra, across which I observed, rising in the distant horizon, some detached small mountains; there is no immediate connexion between the Ural and the mountains which are said to extend along the river Velikaya to the island of Vaigach. I do not mean to say that there is no relation between the elevation of these two systems, but the real Ural ends here, without reaching the sea-coast. I have ascended the mountain which forms its northern extremity; it is surrounded on three sides by small marshy lakes. From the top of the mountain, the sea may be seen in the distance. . . . I have nowhere seen any snowy mountains, but many heaps of snow were observed in the mountains as well as in the plain; the country we have traversed is poor both in animals and plants. . . . Several ravines in the Tundra have enabled me to examine the nature of the rocks: they are schist, freestone, and chalk; and although I have not found any fossils, I hold them to be Silurian. The metamorphic schists of the Ural belong to the same formation."†

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\* This refers to a previous observation. M. Hofmann, on arriving at the mouth of the Voiker, was astonished to find himself so much nearer the chain of the Ural than he had expected.

† For further information on the geography of the Ural, *vide* Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. viii. p. 389; and the elaborate paper by Sir Roderick I. Murchison, with map by J. Arrowsmith, vol. xiii. p. 269.—ED.